The Spiritual Works of Mercy

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The Spiritual Works of Mercy have long been a part of the Christian tradition, appearing in the works of theologians and spiritual writers throughout history. Just as Jesus attended to the spiritual well-being of those he ministered to, these Spiritual Works of Mercy guide us to "help our neighbor in their spiritual needs" (USCCA).

The seven Spiritual Works of Mercy are listed below. After each work of mercy there are also suggestions and words of advice for living them out in our daily lives. Have your own suggestions? Let us know @USCCB using the hashtag #mercyinmotion!

Counseling the doubtful

Everyone has moments of doubt in their faith journey. Nevertheless, we should always remember that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and turn to him along our way.

Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may eventually become wise" (Prov 19:20)

The Cross of Christ "the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength" (1 Cor 1:25)

Has someone asked you for advice? Orient your response to Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Follow Christ with the witness of your life so that others may see God's love revealed in your actions

Accompany a friend who is struggling with believing to join a parish group for service or faith formation, share a book you found useful in dealing with your friend's faith concern, and worship at Sunday Mass

instructing the ignorant

Learn about our faith and be open to talking with others about our beliefs. There is always something more to discover about our faith.

Go on a service trip or short term mission trip. No time? Donate to support someone on their service trip

Volunteer to help with religious education programs at your parish

Invite someone to go to mass with you this weekend

Know your faith! Read through the USCCA to find out more about the Catholic faith and how to live it

admonishing the sinner

Do not judge, but be supportive in helping others find their way and correct their mistakes. Together we can learn to walk more closely with Christ.

In humility we must strive to create a culture that does not accept sin, while realizing that we all fall at times

Don't judge, but guide others towards the path of salvation (see Mt 7:1-2)

When you correct someone, don't be arrogant. We are all in need of God's loving correction.

We should journey together to a deeper understanding of our shared faith

"Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye" (Mt 7:5)

comforting the sorrowful

Be open to listening and comforting those who are dealing with grief. Even if we aren't sure of the right words to say, our presence can make a big difference.

Lend a listening ear to those going through a tough time

Make a home cooked meal for a friend who is facing a difficult time

Write a letter or send a card to someone who is suffering

A few moments of your day may make a lifetime of difference to someone who is going through a difficult time

forgiving injuries

Forgiving others is difficult at times because we do not have God's limitless mercy and compassion. But Jesus teaches us that we should forgive as God forgives, relying on him to help us show others the mercy of God

Let go of grudges

Saying sorry is something we learn as kids, but how often do we really mean it? Forgiveness transforms hearts and lives

Participate in the Sacrament of Penance

Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet

bearing wrongs patiently

Do not be bitter about wrongs done against you. Place your hope in God so that you can endure the troubles of this world and face them with a compassionate spirit.

Frustrated with someone? Step away from the situation, take a few deep breaths, pray the Our Father, asking God for patience

praying for the living and the dead

Prayer is one of the most powerful ways we can support others. Joining together in prayer for the living and the dead entrusts us all into God's care.

Request a mass intention for a friend or family member who is going through a tough time

Request a mass intention for a friend or family member who has passed away

Keep your own book of prayer intentions, writing down the names of those who you are keeping in your prayers

Ask a friend or family member if there is anything you can pray for them about

Through prayer, entrust your cares and concerns for those around you to God